

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 3006

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, SW, IN, US, PK
SUBJECT: SWEDISH REACTION TO SECRETARY-BURENSTAM LINDER
MEETING ON VIGGEN

REF: A) STATE 196722, B) STOCKHOLM 2998

1. EMBASSY GREATLY APPRECIATES RECEIPT REFTEL
SUMMARIZING SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH BURENSTAM
LINDER. WE HAVE NOT HAD REACTION TO MEETING FROM
GOS SOURCES AND HAVE NOT TAKEN ACTIVE POSTURE
YET TO SEEK REACTION. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY KEEN
DISAPPOINTMENT (WHICH IS ALREADY CLEAR FROM PRESS
AND A FEW OFFICIALS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED) AND
PROBABLY CONSIDERABLE SOUL SEARCHING ON COURSE OF
FUTURE GOS POLICY IN AFFECTED AREAS. WE EXPECT
TO BEGIN GETTING MORE REACTIONS OVER NEXT FEW
DAYS AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TALKING TO SENIOR
MFA OFFICIALS EARLY NEXT WEEK ON THE DECISION.

2. ONE GOOD SIGN IS THE MODERATE, STRAIGHTFORWARD
NATURE OF THE MINCOM PRESS RELEASE DATED AUGUST 3
OUTLINING BURENSTAM LINDER'S WASHINGTON DISCUSSION
(REF B).

3. SWEDISH MEDIA REACTION HAS BEEN RATHER LIGHT THUS
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FAR PROBABLY DUE PRINCIPALLY TO PREVIOUS EXTENSIVE
PRESS TREATMENT THAT HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY LEAKS
BEFORE BURENSTAM LINDER'S DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON.
EMBASSY HAS ALREADY CABLED TEXTS OF SUMMARIES OF
MOST EDITORIAL REACTION. IN LINE WITH PATTERN THAT
HAD ALREADY DEVELOPED AFTER LAST WEEK'S PRESS
LEAK, THE MOST BITTER REACTIONS HAVE BEEN BY

MODERATE PRO-US PUBLICATIONS WHILE TRADITIONAL CRITICS HAVE BEEN EASY ON US AND INCLINED TO SNIPE AT GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE POLICY. SVENSKA DAGBLADET, TRADITIONALLY THE MOST CONSISTENTLY PRO-US PUBLICATION IN SWEDEN HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CAUSTIC. LIKE OTHERS, IT MAINTAINS THAT PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC EFFECT OF US DISAPPROVAL WILL BE LOSS OF 500-600 NEW JOBS AT SAAB-SCANIA AND THE LOSS OF SEVERAL BILLION SWEDISH CROWNS ON THE SALE. BOTH THE SALE AND THE JOBS, PAPER ASSERTS, WILL NOW GO TO ONE OF SAAB'S COMPETITORS FROM A COUNTRY" NOT SUBJECT TO DIRECTIVES FROM AN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION". POLITICALLY, ACCORDING TO THIS PAPER, IT IS HUMILIATING AND UNACCEPTABLE TO BOW TO AN AMERICAN VETO. INDUSTRIALLY, IT ADDED, THE US DECISION POINTS UP THE FOLLY OF THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT IT IS PREFERABLE TO PURCHASE FOREIGN AIRCRAFT OUTRIGHT OR BUILD FOREIGN AIRCRAFT UNDER LICENSE. REFERRING TO THE STAN-SAAB COMPUTER SALE TO USSR AND THE VIGGEN-INDIA CASE, SVENSKA DAGBLADET QUESTIONS THE RELIABILITY OF FOREIGN SOURCES AND POINTS OUT THE LOSS OF DECISION-MAKING FREEDOM WHEN A SWEDISH FIRM BECOMES DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN LICENSES. THE PAPER EXPRESSED A DECIDED PREFERENCE FOR SWEDISH-DEVELOPED AND PRODUCED ENGINEERING PRODUCTS--BUT FAILED TO INDICATE THE SOLUTION TO EVER-INCREASING SWEDISH R&D COSTS. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. OTHER PRESS REACTION WAS LESS MELODRAMATIC. DAGENS NYHETER QUESTIONED SEVERAL OF THE ARGUMENTS PURSUED BY GOS, VIZ., THAT A VIGGEN SALE WOULD NOT REPRESENT A STRENGTHENING OF THE WAR POTENTIAL ON THE SUBCONTINENT AND THAT, IF NOT SWEDISH, INDIA WOULD ACQUIRE AN ADVANCED AIRCRAFT IN ANY CASE. SUCH REASONING, THE PAPER SAID, ELIMINATES THE BASIS OF ALL SWEDISH ARMS EXPORT RESTRICTIONS AND DILUTES "SWEDEN'S REPUTATION IN THE DISARMAMENT DEBATE".

5. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AFTONBLADET CRITICIZED BURENSTAM LINDER'S TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON, MAINTAINING THAT SAAB WORKERS COULD HAVE SAVED HIM A TRIP BY POINTING OUT THAT THE VIGGEN "IS JUST AS MUCH AN AMERICAN AS A SWEDISH AIRCRAFT." THE PAPER PREDICTED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE US DECISION THE DEATH OF ALL PLANS FOR THE B3LA PLANE WHOSE DEVELOPMENT WAS TO BE FINANCED THROUGH EXPORT REVENUES. AFTON BLADET SAID SWEDEN IN THE DEFENSE FIELD MUST BE MORE REALISTIC BY NOT ATTEMPTING TO COPY THE ARMS OF THE SUPER POWERS.

6. FINALLY, AN ARTICLE IN SVENSKA DAGBLADET SURMISES THAT UNLESS SAAB-SCANIA BEGINS NOW TO EMPHASIZE CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION MUCH MORE THAN IT HAS, THERE IS A LIKELIHOOD THAT THE COMPANY'S AIRCRAFT DIVISION WILL DISAPPEAR FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE CURRENT VIGGEN PRODUCTION RUN IN 1986.

7. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE DEPARTMENT WITH SIGNIFICANT MEDIA REACTION TO US DECISION ON VIGGEN FOLLOWED BY COMMENTS OF GOS OFFICIALS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE ALONG WITH APPROPRIATE ANALYSIS AS PATTERNS UNFOLD.

KENNEDY-MINOTT
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